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Continuing Latin Notes

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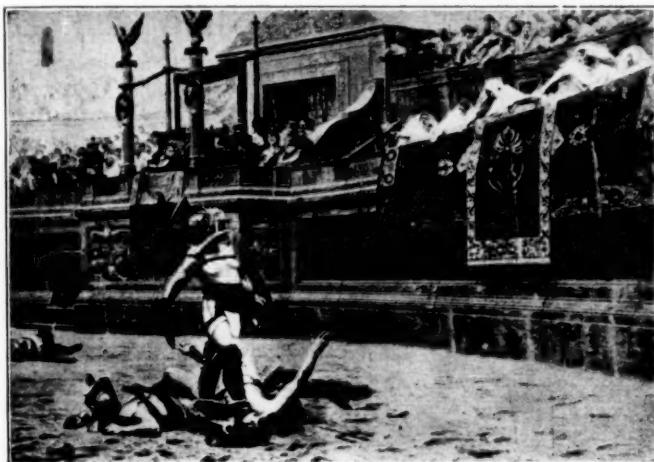
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POLICE VERSO (By Gérôme)

THUMBS DOWN — THUMBS UP

BY THOMAS H. BRIGGS

Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University

Some time ago a young friend asked me the origin of the expression "Thumbs down" and "Thumbs up." After I had explained with care and with kindness "what everybody knows," it occurred to me that it might be interesting to verify my knowledge. It was interesting—and disconcerting. After many hours of pleasant research I am still confused.

The New International Dictionary (first edition) does not record the phrases. The second edition defines *thumbs down*: "A gesture of condemnation—from the practice of spectators at a Roman gladiatorial contest of expressing disapproval by extending the thumb from a clenched fist. See *pollice verso*." That entry has the following: "With thumb turned (downward) or reversed . . ." The second definition of *thumbs up* is: "Erroneously in English use, as if in contrast to *thumbs down*, as a gesture to signify approval."

Murray's New English Dictionary under *thumb* has: "To close down the thumb (*premere*) was a sign of approbation; to extend it (*vertere, convertere, pollex infestus*) a sign of disapprobation." It quotes Garret's *Life of Carlyle* (1887): "They had unanimously turned their thumbs up. 'Sartor' . . . excites universal disapprobation." It also quotes R. Y. Tyrrell in *The Academy* (1907): "'Thumbs down' means 'spare him . . .': the signal for death was 'thumbs up.'"

The Standard Dictionary defines *Pollice Verso*: "With thumbs reversed or extended downward: used among the Romans to direct that a defeated gladiator's life be spared: opposed to *pollice presso*, with thumb closed in the palm of the hand, denoting that the gladiator be put to death." (I find no authority anywhere for the plural *thumbs*; wherever the phrase is used by Latin authors the singular *pollice* occurs.)

By this time, thoroughly confused, I turned to common books of reference.

The signal for death was given (1) by turning the thumb down, according to Seyffert's *Dictionary of Classical Antiquities* and to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*; (2) by turning the thumb out, according to Brewer's *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, to Dryden's translation of Juvenal, to Holt's *Phrase Origins*, to White and Riddell's *Latin-English Dictionary*, and to Lewis' *A Latin Dictionary for Schools*; (3) by turning the thumb toward one's own breast, according to Mayor, quoted by the *Encyclopedia Britannica*; and (4) by turning the thumb up, according to Anthon's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, also to Owen's note on Byron's lines in *Childe Harold*, to Adam's *Roman Antiquities*, to Madden on Juvenal, to Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, and to Putnam's *Complete Book of Quotations*.

The signal for mercy was given (1) by turning the thumb down, according to Adam, Buckley, Madden, Mayor, Owen, and Smith; (2) by pressing the thumb (whether within or on the fingers is not clear), according to Anthon, Buckley, Holt, Lewis, Peck, and Thurston, and White and Riddell; and (3) by waving a handkerchief, according to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and to Seyffert. Martial (12, 28, 7-8) says, "When recently pardon and release were sought for the wounded Myrinus, Hermogenes snatched four handkerchiefs." It should be noted that none of the books of reference consulted gives turning the thumb up as a signal for mercy.

I next turned to Latin authors. Unfortunately the *Thesaurus* has not yet reached the desired entry in its publication, but in other books there were references to Apuleius, Erasmus, Horace, Juvenal, Pliny, Prudentius, Quintilian, and Statius. Each of these I consulted to ascertain its contribution, especially from the context. (Incidentally it may be noted that several of the references are inaccurately recorded.) Most of them are valueless for clarifying the meaning of *pollice verso*. Erasmus lived too late to have any more knowledge than scholars of today. Prudentius, though he visited Rome shortly after gladiatorial contests had been abolished, does not help, nor is Juvenal definite. Statius merely says *eodem pollice damnavit*. Pliny does not use *verso*. The quotations from Apuleius, Horace, and Quintilian refer to applause and derision for oratory.

All the time I was hunting for a meaning of "thumbs down," a painting was in the back of my mind. Finally I recalled that it was by Gérôme. It has been so widely printed in black and white that it is popularly known. It is reproduced in R. H. Titherington's *Jean Léon Gérôme*, in Edward Strahan's collection of photogravures, and in color in Boujon's *Peintres illustres*. The painting was owned by Mrs. A. T. Stewart of New York until her death, when it was bought by Frederick Gilbert Bourne. Neither the Metropolitan Museum nor the Frick Art Reference Library is able to learn of its present location.

Gérôme's painting represents the Vestal Virgins and many of the populace indicating by downward-turned thumbs their

desire for the death of the fallen gladiator, above whom the victor stands proudly. Of course Gérôme had no private information regarding the meaning of *pollice verso*, which is the title of his painting; but he was reputed to be a good classical scholar. His interpretation of the phrase was attacked by John T. Montgomery in *The Philadelphia Librarian*, November 2, 1878, as having no warrant in history as meaning either to kill or to spare, and as being "entirely without classical significance."

This attack was answered by the anonymous author of *Police Verso*, a pamphlet privately printed in Paris, April 10, 1879. In this short monograph, which reprints the Montgomery article and gives a rejoinder and surrejoinder, the charge that the gesture has no classical significance is abundantly disproved; but the meaning of the phrase is not made entirely clear. Most of the discussion is of the meaning given by various scholars to *vertere*. The weight of the adduced evidence seems to be that a thumb extended in any direction indicated a desire for the death of the victim.

The copy of the pamphlet in the Columbia University library has on the title page a picture well-drawn in ink of a left fist with the thumb extended, and three other thumbs protrude from the fist, one from each of the other quadrants of the drawing. The copy in the Widener Library at Harvard has no such drawing; there is no copy in the Library of Congress.

In the Widener Library there are a German edition of *Police Verso*, Leipzig (the date is not given, but someone has written 1894 in pencil on the title page), by A. A. Lugo-woi, "a pseudonym," someone has pencilled, "for Tikhonof, A.A." and a Russian edition of the book published in 1901 and copiously illustrated. This treatise merely argues from the extended thumb that customs are perpetuated. It throws no light on the original meaning of the classical phrase.

This attempt to ascertain the meaning of *pollice verso* to the Romans has emphasized the concentration of scholars on verbalism. Most of the mass of material available concerns the meanings possible to the verb *vertere*, sometimes regardless of its context. To a non-specialist in the field it is disappointing that after so much discussion by scholars there should be so little agreement. But as the natural position of the thumb is out or up from the hand, it is reasonable to conclude that *pollex versus* means the thumb extended downward.

Assuming that the weight of evidence favors "with thumb extended," probably downward, one naturally is curious as to the position of the arm. If the Vestal Virgins, and later the populace, sitting in the amphitheater above the contestants, indicated by a gesture whether the vanquished should live or be dispatched, they would have to make the gesture so that it could be most easily seen. Presumably the victor, or perhaps some official of the games, after an ocular estimate, formed a judgment as to the majority decision; and presumably then as now each excited voter wished to make his vote as emphatic as possible. Vigor would demand a thrust or waving of the extended arm with the thumb extended from the fist so that it could be seen without fail. What would be more natural than that those in the front rows of seats should point their arms and thumbs downward toward the victim and that those more to the rear should hold or wave the arms aloft? Try both positions and you will find that the extended thumb naturally may take either an upward or a downward position. My own impulse would be to indicate "Down with the victim!" by pointing the thumb toward him, but that impulse may be influenced by a long understanding that "Thumbs down" means condemnation. Certainly it is fair to assume, with the lack of evidence to the contrary, that the excited Romans would act according to their own natural impulses. Inquiry to classical scholars and to anthropologists has brought no explanation of any origin or logical development of the gesture for either condemnation or mercy.

ENROLLMENT IN LATIN

By B. L. ULLMAN
University of Chicago

So much alarm is expressed at times about the status of Latin in the high schools that it is worth while to look at the actual facts. Official figures of the United States Office of Education show that 637,000 pupils were studying Latin in the high schools which replied to a request for data in 1928, and 702,000 in 1934—an increase of nearly ten per cent. Furthermore, the large Latin enrollment of New York City was included in 1928, but not in 1934. This would add some 23,000, and change the percentage increase to nearly fourteen. (See *School Life*, September, 1937, p. 22. I owe the New York figures to the kindness of Miss Anna P. MacVay.) Many states showed substantial gains; a few, minor losses. To be sure, the figures for the country as a whole are not complete, as all schools did not reply, but the coverage for the two years 1928 and 1934 was approximately the same. In 1928, enrollment by subjects was reported for 74 percent of the pupils; in 1934, 79 per cent. We cannot estimate the actual total from these percentages, for most of the schools that did not report were the smaller ones which offer no Latin. We can, however, be sure that in 1934 more pupils were studying Latin in the high schools of the United States than ever before.

It is true that between 1928 and 1934 the total high-school population increased by 45 per cent—from 3,911,000 to 5,669,000. But we cannot expect the Latin population to keep pace with the total school population in these days of the ever-expanding high school. In 1880 only 2.8 per cent of the young people between 14 and 17 years of age attended public secondary schools; in 1930 the percentage was 46.6. We are quite content with a modest absolute increase in Latin and find no cause for alarm in the smaller proportion studying our subject. It still is the chief foreign language in high school. French is next, with 406,000 in 1928, 482,000 in 1934. In the latter year Latin had 220,000 (46%) more pupils than French. Spanish increased not at all, remaining at 273,000. German had what seems to be a sensational increase of 50 per cent, but that is due to the small number involved—106,000 in 1934.

According to the Report of the Classical Investigation, there were 593,000 Latin pupils in grades 9-12 of the public high schools in 1922. This figure is based on reports from about the same number of schools as the figures for 1928 and 1934. In the latter year, then, the increase over the good old days of 1922 is 132,000, or over 22 per cent (with New York City). It is true that in the earlier year the Latin enrollment slightly exceeded that of the other three languages put together, and that in 1934 this was no longer the case. But since there was no loss in Latin, we should be glad that the enrollment in the other languages increased.

Not only is Latin the leading language, but it also makes a very respectable showing as compared with other subjects. In 1934, when 725,000 pupils were studying Latin, 386,000 studied art, 501,000 home economics, 283,000 industrial arts, 759,000 American history, 1,130,000 all social studies apart from history. (For detailed figures see *School Life* for February, 1937, and succeeding issues.)

But it may be urged that conditions have changed materially since 1934. Only another complete study, such as presumably will be made in 1940, can tell us the real facts. It does not seem to me, however, that any great change has taken place. No doubt there are schools, even states, in which there has been a decline; on the other hand there are certainly some in which there has been an increase. As a rapid check I obtained figures from three large schools for the last three autumns. These schools were chosen simply because they were large schools in different parts of the country, and the figures could be obtained quickly through

the kindness of friends; it was not known beforehand whether the figures would be favorable or unfavorable.

In the Oak Park (Ill.) High School (I owe these figures to the kindness of Miss Loura B. Woodruff) the Latin enrollment for the last three years and the total school enrollment are as follows:

	1936	1937	1938
Latin	943	907	877
School	3764	3641	3531

The slight loss in Latin agrees almost exactly in percentage with the loss in school enrollment. The percentage of pupils studying Latin is about 25 each year—a very satisfactory figure. Particularly encouraging are the figures for first-year Latin: 351 in 1936, 326 in 1937, 362 in 1938—a larger number than in either of the preceding years.

In Peabody High School, Pittsburgh, Pa. (for which Mr. N. E. Henry kindly furnished the information), the figures are as follows:

	1936	1937	1938
Latin	700	663	649
School	3072	3000	3100

There is a slight loss in percentage in 1938 over the two preceding years, from about 22 to about 21. Here again the figures for first-year Latin are encouraging: 254 in 1936, 211 in 1937, 241 in 1938.

From Wadleigh High School, New York City, the following figures were kindly furnished by Miss Frances Grandin:

	1936	1937	1938
Latin	453	331	322
School	4984	4377	3812

The Latin enrollment represents 9 per cent of the total enrolment in 1936, 7.6 per cent in 1937, 8.4 per cent in 1938. Here again there is a percentage increase this year over last, though the total percentile variation over the three years is not great.

In spite of this excellent showing, one evil trend that has been in existence for a long time has not been checked and has perhaps even gained headway, that of reducing Latin to a two-year course. One New England teacher reports a movement to alternate Cicero and Virgil, another a move to drop Virgil. This simply means that New England is now having the experience which some other parts of the country have undergone for some time. But more serious is the statement of another New England teacher, who reports that her principal wants to reduce Latin to three years, although eighty pupils are now studying Cicero and forty Virgil! Similarly, in the town of Cicero, a suburb of Chicago, where one thousand pupils are enrolled in the first two years of Latin, the principal refuses to organize a Cicero class, although from thirty-five to forty pupils ask for it every semester. No Cicero in Cicero, of all places!

There is no question that there are forces at work inimical to the study of Latin—but that is nothing new. We are holding three lines of defense: freshman college Latin, third-year high-school Latin, and first-year high-school Latin. Our weakest line is college Latin, and there we have lost much. Weaker than it should be, and object of most immediate attacks, is third-year Latin. Strongest of all is our first-year line, which seems to be doing splendidly. But since it is our most vital line, we must give it our chief attention, without, however, abandoning the other two positions.

THE DEBT OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION TO THE CLASSICS

BY HON. JOHN KIRKLAND CLARK

*President of the New York State Board of Law Examiners
Vice-President of the Association of the Bar of New York City*

(Note: This paper was read at the annual meeting of the American Classical League in New York City, June 29, 1938.)

Fellow Classicists: When, some weeks ago, your Committee honored me with an invitation to address you on this occasion, I accepted with much hesitation, for I knew that my schedule both for the days of your meeting and for the intervening weeks was so heavy that it seemed doubtful whether I could possibly find the time to prepare such a talk as you should receive on this subject. That doubt has now resolved itself into a certainty. The defendant is convicted—with a recommendation for mercy on the grounds of impossibility of performance. To prepare, adequately, a really worthwhile paper on such a subject would take a lifetime of study and years of research. During the past two months, this space of time, at least, has not been available!

I was, however, moved to accept the invitation because of my keen interest in the work of your organization. That interest was kindled in my school days when I was so fortunate as to have inspiring instruction in both Latin and Greek at the old Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. It continued during most of my college course at Yale, when I was again exceptionally favored by having as my professors such men as Edward P. Morris, Bernadotte Perrin, and dear old Reynolds, whose first name nobody knew because he was universally, but affectionately, known as "Limpie" Reynolds, because of his infirmity which endeared him to all with whom he came in contact.

During the years at law school, and for thirty-five years in the profession, I have almost constantly felt a keen realization of the value to me in my professional work, and in the enrichment of life generally, of the training in the classics with which I had been blessed. Those of us who are drawn into the hurly-burly of professional life in the great metropolis and undertake to indulge such expensive tastes as raising and educating a family have little leisure, however, for the indulgence, in youth and middle life, of a continued study of the classics. Rather do we feel as an integral part of the process of living, and especially of practicing law, the benevolent effects which resulted from our early baptism in the classics.

Just as the study of art in its manifold forms—painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and the dance—creates, or at least develops, a sense of the beauty of color and form and motion and rhythm, so inspiring guidance through the rich stores of classical literature cultivates and stimulates in the minds of those fortunate enough to have such an experience a love of the beauty of thought, of philosophy, of grace and skill in the expression of thought and philosophy in words. These qualities, I like to think, when one is trained to appreciate the beauties of the classics, enter into his soul and become a part of his very being.

Dr. Shimer, our Phi Beta Kappa Secretary, quotes a delightful response from Professor Kittredge—who, when Mr. Shimer expressed regret that he had so specialized in the classics that he had not found an opportunity of taking Dr. Kittredge's courses and said in the conversation that he feared that he did not have with him much knowledge of the classics which he had studied, responded, "How much of the roast beef you have eaten in the last twenty years have you still with you?" The educational process brings into the soul content—the spiritual well-being of a man—the same sort of strength and quality that good food well assimilated brings in the way of strength to the physical body. It enters into the very fibre of one's being.

Especially is this the case in a profession which owes so

much as the law does to the classics. The very language, the terminology and the forms of expression which we use daily in the courts and in our briefs derive from classical sources. It would be interesting, indeed, to study the briefs of counsel and the opinions of our courts setting forth the contentions of the parties and the decisions of the judges, and to ascertain how large a proportion of the language used is of classical derivation. Infinitely more important, of course, is the substance; and, while we proudly boast of English Common Law, we find constantly clear evidence that the principles underlying it are principles which were recognized by the Romans and the Greeks and the Hebrews in the earliest days of literary expression. How, indeed, can one undertake to be a lawyer who has not some conception of the laws of the Medes and the Persians, the Mosaic Code, and the basic principles of Roman law, carried along, after the mediaeval darkness, by the French and Spanish Codes, which have so greatly influenced the formation of our own legal theories?

One of the members of that infant profession, the study of personality as affecting the choice of life work, has conducted hundreds, if not thousands, of tests which tend to establish that the possession of a good and accurate power of word selection coincides with the possession of executive ability—just how, or why, he does not undertake to explain. If this be so with regard to executives in financial and business and manufacturing enterprises, how much more would it seem inevitable that the possession of a real vocabulary aids one to reach success in the practice of a profession like the law, where one's powers of expression are constantly called into play!

For the past seventeen years I have been engaged in the work of endeavoring to separate the wheat from the chaff in the selection of those who should be licensed to practice law by conducting bar examinations—and it need hardly be said that we find among those who have to be discarded as unsuitable chaff individuals who write the phrase *res ipsa loquitur* as *res ipsa loquitur*, or a *bona fide* purchaser as a "bonified" purchaser. These are simply random examples illustrating how our candidates occasionally exhibit positive evidence of the lack of a classical training—and almost invariably, either incidentally or consequently, a lack of legal ability.

This, however, is merely superficial evidence of classical ignorance. Far more basic are the evidences which frequently accompany them of a lack of the power of trained thought. Logic, rationalization, philosophy, as they have come down to us from the thinkers of old through their works in Latin and in Greek, develop themselves in a personality through the twofold process of translating into our words of today the beauties of the language in which they clothed their thoughts and at the same time enriching our minds with the thoughts which they so clearly and forcefully expressed.

It seems utterly unfair to the individual—and equally unfair to society—that those who undertake to serve the public calling of the law, as officers of the court, should not have an education enriched by such training. To my mind, a thorough training in the fundamentals of classical learning is as essential to the proper exercise of the franchise which we of the law are given by society as is the power of speech. Would that we could be spared those who have the power of speech, but who are inadequately trained in the power of thought and of clear and forceful presentation of a well-developed argument!

In this changing world of ours, in this process of education which is now being subjected to so profound a re-analysis, it behooves those of us to whom classical learning is dear—who realize the vital need of it in the training of our profession—to see to it that our case is efficiently presented in the formation of the new pattern of intellectual training which shall result from the current studies of college and professional training. How, then, can this be most effectively

accomplished? How can we impress upon those who shall have the final decision that the preservation and enrichment and enlargement of our cultural studies in classical subjects are as essential from the point of view of successful living in a profession like the law as such purely mechanical studies as accounting and business organization?

To those of us who, in the love of the classics, hold communion with the sources of power which they release to us in the enrichment of life and the greater efficiency and helpfulness of our professional service, there comes a clear call to array our evidence and present our case so clearly, so ably, so overwhelmingly, that in the new schedule of studies there will be offered not merely ample opportunity for classical study, but a love and a desire among those who contemplate entering professional life to drink deeply at the well of classical knowledge.

You who are actively engaged in the work, you who have devoted your lives to the development of a love and appreciation on the part of your students for the intellectual stimulation which can be derived only from such studies should, I feel, bestir yourselves to call upon the leaders of the bar to aid you in your fight. We of the law are so busy in our daily tasks that we little appreciate the need for such work. With your cooperation, with your stimulation of our realization of our debt to the classics, you may, I believe, receive enthusiastic and able support from those whose help may well carry to success the fight for the preservation and extension and enrichment of the study of the classics. Point out to us, who seldom do take the time to realize it, how deeply indebted our profession is to yours, and call upon us to discharge, at least in part, that indebtedness by lending you stalwart aid in your fight.

A REPLY TO DR. TONSOR

BY ALLEN E. WOODALL

Northern State Teachers College, Aberdeen, South Dakota

Certain points raised in Dr. Charles A. Tonsor's article, "A Comment on 'How Much Case Syntax?'" in THE CLASSICAL OUTLOOK for October, 1938, pp. 4 and 5, come well within my own experience as a teacher of English. In defending the teaching of grammar as grammar, Dr. Tonsor states three things that Latin should do:

1. It must give pupils a better analytical ability . . . than they get from English, mathematics, or science.
2. It must give them a better or more discriminating command of English than English does.
3. It must give them better social concepts than they get from their work in social science.

This is a hard program. But let us take the points up, one at a time. As an English teacher for over a dozen years I can bear witness that Latin does give students a better grammatical sense of analysis than they seem to get from their English courses; I wish I could also say that it gives all of them a better sense of synthesis—i.e., makes them better writers of English. Those who have taken Latin are often as awkward in writing as those who have never had it. I seem to feel that this may be because some of them have absorbed a Latin and not an English style sense. They have been taught that English is Latin-derived. That is, of course, not true; English is a separate language. Anyone long in contact with college freshmen who have and who have not had Latin, sooner or later comes to the conclusion that Latin sometimes does and sometimes does not give "a better or more discriminating command of English."

There is only one way in which Latin can give better social concepts than work in social science; and that will depend on the experience, personality, and background of both the Latin and the social science teachers. Latin may give much that no other study can, even in this field, if the teacher can show the perspective of history, and in offering

the student an intimate contact with a much different and remote civilization, take him out of his smug rut of local prejudice to give him new tolerance and a fresh viewpoint.

The layman still remains confused. Probably there is no subject that can be justified completely, except by a theory of education made to fit it. To me it seems that the lovers of classic literature would do well to state frankly that Latin has no direct advantage over any other subject as "discipline," but that it may form a basis for grammar and vocabulary, and that its chief claim to a place in the school curriculum is the claim of music, art, and the "belles lettres." It is a cultural subject.

A SOCIAL SCIENTIST LOOKS AT LATIN

BY HAROLD GLUCK

Walton High School, New York City

It is of no use to bemoan the fact that Latin once occupied a regal throne. The glories of the past may make good contemplation and day-dreaming, but they may also blind us to the realities of the present day. It is very true that Latin once was the characteristic earmark of an educated person. It was the language of languages. A scholar teaching in London would have been just as much at home teaching in Lisbon or in Berlin. Anything worth while was written in Latin. In the year 1813 Thomas Clark wrote in the preface to an American edition of Julius Caesar's *Commentaries*, "All who had any pretension to learning wrote in the Latin language, which consequently became the key to every science."

But Progress, as some may call it, or Change, as others may denote it, comes relentlessly, caring not whom it may crush nor looking at whom it may elevate. And with the passage of years the position of Latin in the school curriculum has changed. As an elective course it has to meet the competition of a great variety of courses which may run the gamut from pottery-making and automobile-driving to home economics or millinery. And as a language elective it must meet major competition from French, Spanish, Italian, and German, and minor competition from Greek and Hebrew. To complete the disharmony, there are those educators who feel that Latin could safely be abolished from the school curriculum without any appreciable loss to education.

An interested person pleading his cause must realize that all favorable evidence which he introduces to substantiate his contentions will be minutely scrutinized. Regardless of what the Latin teacher may say in favor of Latin, there is always the epithet of "vested interest" to be hurled. Cold-bloodedly, from the economic point of view, if students do not study Latin, many teachers either will be out of jobs or will be teaching a subject to which their hearts and souls are not bound.

Since I am not a language teacher, the charge of "vested interest" cannot be hurled at me. I do write about foreign languages, but my interest is only that of a social scientist. And it is with this point of view that I discuss Latin.

Name-calling is a favorite trick of the propagandist. If you can tag the right name to a given situation in order to arouse a desired reaction, much can be accomplished. Examine such names or slogans as "Communist," "Freedom of Speech," "Americanism," "Radical," and "Red," and see if you really know what they signify. The purpose of name-calling is to prevent real thought from taking place. The moment the mind receives the impression of the name, the reaction takes place. And name-calling has been used with deadly effect in the case of Latin. It is a "Dead Language." "Do you want to study a Dead Language? Of course not! It is absolutely useless. It is just dead." A fine piece of reasoning, you must admit. Some day some interested person may collect statistics to show how many students have chosen another

language because of this subtle name-calling. One is almost tempted to say, "There should be a law against it."

Latin teachers must do everything within their power to show that Latin is not a "Dead Language." (Miss Gude, in the April, 1938, issue of *The Language Teacher's Note-Book*, has been kind enough to call attention to the fact that I include Latin as a modern language.) Every means must be taken to remove this stigma. I merely wish to mention two approaches which may be made. The first is to show how Latin "lives" in our present English tongue, and how it is used in the formation of new words. This, of course, is being done today. There is a philosophical concept that could be used here to very good advantage. A thing cannot, in and of itself, be its own measure or standard. The standard must be without the subject. We teach English courses so that the pupil may have English at his command. But to know English, really, you must have a standard outside of it, namely Latin.

The second approach is to show that Latin is a language actually in use at the present day. It is the official language of the Vatican, and it is used in decrees and treaties. One may read the treaty between Italy and the Vatican in modern Latin.

Another word which has been unfavorably connected with Latin is "hard." Latin is a "hard" language! That is enough to scare any student who already has not been frightened by the terrifying thought of studying a "Dead Language." Are the competing languages easier to learn? There are situations in all languages which are difficult or easy for students to comprehend. There are no "bargains" to be bought in language election.

Up to this point I feel that practically all Latin teachers will agree with me. Latin has been maligned, and unfairly so. But my concluding suggestions may cause much dissent. Why not use some of the great reservoir of almost untapped Latin material which was written between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, and which can be correlated with our work in social studies? Within those centuries a world was evolving, and the thought of this period in Europe was for the greater part expressed in Latin. For example, the writings of Grotius or Suarez could well be used today.

This is by no means to be interpreted that we are to ignore Latin writings of other periods. I would like to see parts of Roman law included, as well as modern decrees and treaties written in Latin.

Latin must be able to see new horizons. It has a justification for existence, but unless it can express it, it may not survive.

(Note: Several Latin textbooks published in recent years do make use of the mediaeval and modern Latin recommended by Mr. Gluck.)

STEPHEN LEACOCK AND THE CLASSICS

(Note:—Many friends of the classics were alarmed over the wide publicity given recently to an attack upon modern educational procedures in general, and upon the teaching of Latin incidentally, by the noted Canadian humorist, Stephen Leacock. The president of the American Classical League, Professor B. L. Ullman, has replied to Mr. Leacock, and has released his note simultaneously to the *New York Times*, to Mr. Leacock, and to *THE CLASSICAL OUTLOOK*. It is printed below.)

It perhaps is unwise and unsafe to comment on the serious remarks of a humorist. I, at any rate, pay Mr. Leacock the compliment of taking seriously his two articles on education in the *New York Times Magazine* for October 23 and 30, 1938. It is unwise, I say, because one can be turned aside and made out a pompous dolt by a witty quip from Mr. Leacock. But I take the risk by saying first of all that I agree with much of what he says. Education does take too long. But

Mr. Leacock overlooks one important reason why it does—the fact that all the world goes to high school nowadays, and much of it to college, whereas in Mr. Leacock's time and even in mine this was not true. Education had to be brought down to the level of the average, or rather the weakest intellect, and the brighter pupils are being forced to dawdle along at the pace set by the slowest. Devise a scheme for making the young Leacocks of today work as hard as Mr. Leacock worked when he was their age and the educational process will be greatly speeded up for them.

But my real reason for writing is Mr. Leacock's remarks on the teaching of Latin. Be it noted at once that he favors Latin but decries only the supposedly antique methods in vogue. It would be difficult for him to find schools in the United States in which Latin is taught as he describes it. It is some fifty years since he waved us Latinists a fond farewell, and he still pictures us as driving the old surrey in which we took him for a ride. He does not know that we, too, are riding in 1939 streamlined pedagogical automobiles and have abandoned the old ways of teaching. Not even the teachers today know the rules for the gender of third-declension nouns. The textbooks omit them, as they do the other grammatical gadgets that Mr. Leacock mentions. There is no more "liver" complaint, and not a single "bubus" is to be seen on the horizon.

—B. L. ULLMAN.

THE COLLAPSE OF THE CATILINIAN CONSPIRACY

BY CAMPBELL McDONALD
Granby, Quebec, Canada

(Note: This account of Volturcius' connection with the conspiracy of Catiline is, of course, merely hypothetical; it does not appear in the story as told by Cicero or by Sallust.)

Characters

Catiline . . . Leader of the conspiracy against the Republic.
Lentulus . . . Leader of the conspiracy in Rome after the departure of Catiline.
Cethegus . . . A conspirator.
Statilius . . . A conspirator.
Gabinius . . . A conspirator.
Caeparius . . . A conspirator.
Volturcius . . . An informer.

Place: Rome. Time: 63 B.C.

Scene: The interior of a Roman house. Catiline, Lentulus, Cethegus, Statilius, Gabinius, and Caeparius are all present. As the curtain rises, Catiline is seen deeply sunk in thought, while the other five are clustered together. When the curtain is finally up, Catiline turns to his fellow-conspirators and addresses them.

Catiline My mind is made. If go I must, I shall!
But coward call me not! I fear no man,
And least of all that Cicero, who says,
Forsooth, that Catiline should best begone!
'Tis not his threats, his puny weakling words,
That cause my flight from Rome. You know full well
That Manlius desires my presence where
His camp is pitched. Etrurian hills and dales
Will prove a pleasant rest from filthy Rome—
No sick'ning smell of sweat to nostrils prick,
Of craven, blackened slaves in the market chained;
No pushing, milling crowd of Roman oafs;
No sniffing nobles, looking down their nose;
No conscript fathers dull, to leave in haste
Their benches bare at my approach—the dogs!

No spies to fear—no spies to hinder plans;
No Cicero!

Lentulus Explain us not at length!
We understand your ire—we sympathize
In your flight. With Manlius rest you'll find;
Your weary brain, when once renewed, may turn
Its efforts to our pressing problems here.
And, too, you need not fear our failure here
While you are gone. We know our task by heart
It shall be done as you yourself would wish.
But now, O Catiline, the time does fly—
You have no time to spare—you must away!

Cethegus Well said! For even now the cursed spies
May lurk not far, their ears distended wide,
To catch our smallest word, and then to run
To Cicero, there to exaggerate
Their tale, and have him at our heels the nonce!

Statilius No chances take, my lord, but flee at once!

Catiline (He has crossed left during the foregoing speeches; now he spins on his heel and shouts angrily.)
Enough! Enough advice, you babbling fools!
I know the need for haste as well as you,
And wish no needless warnings, tardy wise!
But now, before I leave, my orders take.
O Lentulus, the Gauls are yours to sway—
Cajole, persuade, and win them over to us.
Gabinius, when the time is ripe, then yours
To slaughter all, to stick these Roman pigs!
To you, Cethegus, goes the honored task—
To you it falls to slit the consul's throat,
And lave in the gore of hamstrung Senators!
This hated Rome shall burst in flame when you,
Statilius, shall reckless fling your torch!
Remember, too, Caeparius, the slaves
Must be aroused to turn against their lords!—
'Tis all; but see you make no slips or faults!
But now I go. Forget my counsels not!
We all shall meet at Rome's demise. Farewell!

(Exit Catiline left. The other conspirators start to whisper among themselves, while Lentulus continues to stare through the door after Catiline.)

Caeparius Our Catiline does act as Zeus with us.
Methinks his self-placed crown has maddened him.

Statilius True words! He even condescends to us!—
And sometimes not! Remark just now the way
He made impatient shout at us, and then
His orders gave in kingly tones, as if
We were but scum.

Gabinius Who cares? He now is gone.
We shall have peace as long as he remains
An absentee. Why spoil this new-won peace
By useless plaints? We should make gay tonight!

Caeparius And drink to Catiline's departure!
Dolts!
You prate like drooling babes of making gay
When Catiline has left us work to do.
His parting words—are they so soon forgot?
But now we lack a leader. Who shall be
The favored one?

Caeparius I know! I have my dice.
One roll apiece—the highest wins the post!

Lentulus Not quite so fast, my friends. You leave your choice

Of leader far too much to chance. We have
No need of loaded dice, Caeparius.
My plan is better still.

Statilius Inform us, then,
Should scheme of yours be better than the dice.

Lentulus I will enlighten you—or rather, soon
Awaken you. Behold your new-made prince!
Now Catiline is gone, I claim all right
To rule instead. I understand his plans
Much more than you. Besides, my rank demands
The highest post. I once was consul o'er
The stupid Roman plebs—what rank have you?
For that, soothsayers tell my destiny
To wear the crown of Rome; I chance to be
The third Cornelius.—'Tis settled, then.
No discontent nor plots behind my back!
How now? Does anyone dispute my claim?
If so, speak out!—No one replies. 'Tis well.

Caeparius (aside). Still do I think the dice the better course.

Lentulus But now to work. I'll first negotiate
With that Volturcius, to win the Gauls
All over to our cause. Don't gape, you fools!
Bestir yourselves, and hither call the chief
Of the Allobroges!

(Exit Statilius right, after a hurried conference among the four.)

Cethegus We three have tasks
Awaiting care, and think it best to leave.
At sunrise, then, we shall return.

Gabinius Farewell.

(Exeunt Cethegus, Gabinius, Caeparius. Lentulus paces up and down. Enter Volturcius right.)

Lentulus Ah, good Volturcius!—Welcome, friend!

Volturcius My greetings, Lentulus. You sent for me?

Lentulus Mayhap you know that Catiline has left
And I have taken charge of his affairs.

Volturcius I heard as much from your Statilius.

Lentulus 'Tis urgent we agree upon the plans
For the Gauls to plunder Rome.

(Volturcius nods. Lentulus waves him to a seat, and they both sit down.)

Lentulus Your men must pounce
At a given sign—not early, nor too late.

Volturcius I understand. But what reward is pledged?
These men of Gaul—they do not fight for nothing, sire.

(The two put their heads together and speak inaudibly for several seconds. Lentulus gesticulates and pleads.)

Lentulus (raising his voice in irritation).
I give my word to pay—

Volturcius No promises!
Mere words mean naught! I place my trust in none.—

Some writings I desire.

Lentulus (thinking deeply, then springing up).
By Zeus, I know
The thing to prove my faith!—Here! Papers signed
By all the five confess the plot. Receive
And keep them till you get the promised pay.

Volturcius A deal! I thank you for the guarantee!—
'Tis settled, then. I take my leave.

Lentulus But stay,

And join me in a glass of wine.

Volturcius My regrets;
I have to go at once. (*Aside*)—To Cicero,
And give these seals and damning letters to
His custody. Smile now, O Lentulus,
For soon a rope will choke your joyfulness.
(To Lentulus) Farewell, my trusting friend!

(Exit Volturcius left.)

Curtain

HAVE YOU TRIED THIS?

A Junior Classical League Convention

The great possibilities inherent in a state convention of Junior Classical Leagues are indicated in a recent letter from Miss Abby L. Ross, of the Clinton (Illinois) Community High School. Such a convention was suggested as a Jun.or Classical League activity by Miss Latta in 1937. The second annual convention of the Junior Classical Society of Illinois was held at Clinton on Oct. 1, 1938. It was attended by 22 teachers, 150 visiting pupils, and 78 local pupils—a total of 250. To each person was given an attractive program, in the shape of a Greek temple. After a Latin song, a gavel made of olive wood was presented to the convention by the Clinton society. Following the formal business meeting a symposium was held on the topic, "What Latin Should Mean to a High-School Pupil," and there were exhibits and programs by the visiting schools. During the recreational hour, the company passed through a long corridor where a Sibyl's cave was arranged, with an electric fan blowing out oak leaves bearing weird prophecies. They then moved to an open court where altars for Jupiter, Minerva, and Mercury stood ready for the offerings of the visitors. From envelopes provided by their hosts, the visitors drew amusing paper bullocks, swine, geese, chickens, etc., and small packages of meal and salt, to be offered on the altars. Later the company was taken for an automobile ride in cars furnished by automobile dealers and citizens of Clinton. In the new State Park, cups of orange ice were served by the local classical club. A luncheon prepared by mothers of the local pupils was followed by songs, stunts, installation, and awarding of prizes. A subscription to THE CLASSICAL OUTLOOK was awarded to Miss Myrtle Sanford of the Herrin (Illinois) High School for bringing her pupils the greatest distance—196 miles. Other prizes were for the largest visiting delegation and for the best exhibit. Miss Ross has presented the American Classical League with a full "kit" as furnished all guests, including program, tickets, badges, song-scroll, paper animals, etc.—L.B.L.

SEYMOUR VAN SANTVOORD

Seymour Van Santvoord, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the American Classical League, died at his home in Troy, New York, on November 15, 1938, at the age of eighty. By profession an attorney, he had long been an active friend of the classics. Not only did he place his considerable ability in financial matters at the service of the American Classical League, but his books, *The House of Caesar*, *The Roman Forum*, and *Octavia, a Tale of Ancient Rome*, are well-known to classical teachers all over the country. He was a member of the Archaeological Institute of America, and lent his support to many other organizations the activities of which were concerned with things classical. His devoted and unselfish service, throughout a long and busy life, will not soon be forgotten.

DO KENTUCKY LEADERS WANT THE CLASSICS TO GO?

Under the title given above, the Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal published on Sunday, April 10, 1938, a feature story occupying almost a full page, and illustrated with photographs of prominent men. The article was prepared by Jonah W. D. Skiles, a member of the American Classical League. From letters sent out to prominent Kentuckians, Mr. Skiles received many answers, most of them decidedly friendly to the classics. Those replying included an editor, an actress, the majority leader of the U. S. Senate, business men, a geologist, a retired admiral, and the Lieutenant-Governor of Kentucky. Through the courtesy of the Kentucky Classical Association, each member of the American Classical League who desires a copy of this important article may receive one by sending a self-addressed envelope, stamped with a 1½c stamp, to Jonah W. D. Skiles, 1745 Deer Lane, Louisville, Ky. Perhaps other members of the League may serve the classics by preparing similar feature articles for papers in their own communities.

A NEW DEVICE BULLETIN

The American Classical League Service Bureau has now for sale the new bulletin of devices for the classroom. This is the result of the cooperation of teachers who were asked in the December, 1937, issue of *THE CLASSICAL OUTLOOK* to send in their favorite and tried devices. The bulletin is 26 pages in length and will be sold for 25 cents a copy.—D.P.L.

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The American Classical League and the National Federation of Foreign Language Teachers will offer a joint program at Cleveland on Tuesday, February 28, 2:15 P.M. in connection with the annual meeting of the American Association of School Administrators. B. L. Ullman, of the University of Chicago, is chairman of the program committee and the secretary is Stephen L. Pitcher, Supervisor of Foreign Languages in St. Louis. Other members of the program committee are: M. Julia Bentley, Hughes High School, Cincinnati; W. L. Carr, Teachers College, Columbia University; Theodore Huebner, Acting Director of Foreign Languages, New York City; and E. B. de Sauzè, Director of Foreign Languages, Cleveland. An interesting program is being prepared, details of which will be announced in the February number of *The Classical Outlook*.

On Nov. 19 the Fifth Annual Foreign Language Conference held at New York University considered the special topic, "The Place of Foreign Languages in the Curriculum, as Viewed by the Essentialist." Prof. William C. Bagley, of Columbia University, delivered the principal address of the day. Prof. Heber H. Ryan, of the State Teachers College, Montclair, N. J., answered Prof. Bagley on behalf of the Progressivists in modern education. Latin teachers especially appreciated Prof. Bagley's ringing defense of their subject, and his report that impartial investigation had proved that the best general index of possible teaching success in any field is success in Latin after the first two years of it. Following the general session, the conference broke up into sections representing the various foreign languages, English for foreigners, and general language. Prof. Rollin H. Tanner, Secretary-Treasurer of the American Classical League, organized and directed the conference, and presided at the luncheon following, at which John Erskine spoke on "How Dead Are the Classics?" Those present were profoundly impressed with Mr. Erskine's deep love for, and familiarity with, Greek literature.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art is displaying from December 28 through February 19 a special exhibition of

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Augustan art, including casts from the Mostra Augustea in Rome, and originals from the Louvre, the Naples Museum, and American collections, both public and private. The exhibition includes specimens of both major and minor arts, and is one of unusual importance. It commemorates the Augustan Bimillennium.

AMERICAN CLASSICAL LEAGUE SERVICE BUREAU

DOROTHY PARK LATTA, *Director*

The American Classical League Service Bureau has for sale the following material on *The Value of Latin* previously published. Catalogue published in 1935, but kept up to date, is available for 20c postpaid. Please order by number.

Mimeographs

177. How Latin helps in the study of Spanish. 10c.
179. Some notes on the value of Latin as a guide to conduct. 10c.
249. Mother Ducere. A pageant on word derivation. 10c.
268. The values of Latin in high school. 10c.
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- IV. English poems dealing with classical mythology. 25c.
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THE VALUE OF THE CLASSICS TODAY—a cross section of current opinion in the United States today. An important compilation of recent statements by prominent people. 2c.